

?G>(! ? <D>? I(D(: <?E>8E(= (: B@>8<?(@@? <! 8? < I&D ; 8
>8DB>< : G&D ; 8 = : I @

8J8 : H(= : I :

I 8F? >DK 8 <D : G>8E(= (: B@&DB I(8@
89 : <L(k@D?D8! : EE8 = 8 : G&8 I B! ?D(: <2k<(= 8>(?

Abstract

Despite the onslaught of modernity, African traditional religion has survived. The return of the gods who were purportedly in retreat at the inception of colonialism is a demonstration that they never went away but rather went into hibernation waiting for the right time to counter attack. The much awaited opportunity seems to have presented itself for African traditional religious renaissance because the colonial religions such as Christianity and Islam have failed to meet the needs of the people in their host communities. People now seek solutions to their spiritual problems elsewhere other than the church and mosque. Even the elites and the highly placed in the society now resort to traditional means of getting solutions to their problems. Historical method was employed for this study. It was discovered that politicians, pastors, evangelists and even the elites now patronize traditional medicine men for solution to their spiritual problems which is a clear indication that the Gods have returned. The paper concludes with a suggestion that for a complete revival of African traditional religion, we must remove bad practices, write the sacred lore, write the prayers legends etc. mark and recognize the sacred sites and days

A%5X" ,R+W? ' ,SQ*#D ,*RSS'#2k>%.SYS'#2k>%#*S++*#Q%2U%kk="R+

(#\$, 'R/QSS'#

The quest for African Traditional Religious Renaissance has become imperative in order to rediscover African traditional values. According to Mbeki in Asiegbu (2010), it aims at reclaiming the pride of the African. This does not imply a return to the glorious and primordial African past. Rather, it depicts an attempt to restore the cultural heritage of the African, setting him at par with the western and Asian cultures in a world of globalization. This was brought about by the Africans' predicament between adopting the values of western advanced technological society and lifestyle and maintaining African traditional values. With the arrival of the missionaries, it was somewhat evident that the method of evangelization of Africa failed to respect the cultural contexts of the African people. Nevertheless, the mixture of colonization with evangelization confused the message of Christ with other material and personal agenda. Obinna(2010) put it this way, as salvation from evil and sin were preached on one hand by one set of Europeans, the exploitation of human and material resources to the peoples' disadvantage was

carried on by another set. As a result, Jesus Christ, the central theme in the salvation message came to be admired and suspected. In addition, the mixture of colonization with evangelization also introduced the idea of supremacy of both European religion and culture over African Indigenous Religion and culture. Ekwunife (2010) describes this relationship between the colonial evangelizers and the slave nations with regards to culture and religion as superiority/inferiority in terms of human relationship and partly in terms of superior versus inferior cultures. In terms of race, it could be described as superior versus inferior race; in terms of religion and religious practices, the god of slave masters will consistently be regarded in thinking, feeling and action as the supreme God versus the 'nothing god' of African traditional religion and culture. As a result of this, African gods retreated. However, while the gods were in retreat, they left behind their artifacts in form of the African Indigenous Religion in preparation for a more radical re-emergence. Furthermore, there were anti-witchcraft cults and the spirit world among various tribes in Nigeria and Africa at large. These cults which were often anti-colonial in origin were suppressed by the colonial authorities and strongly discouraged by Christian missionary activity. More recently, they have demonstrated a dynamic return not only in Nigeria but elsewhere in Africa. The cults are not so much a revival of indigenous religious beliefs but that the old gods never went away. Also, many years after the communication of the Christian message by the European evangelizers, there is a return of the gods from their retreat in a more subtle and different manner. Christians in Africa transposed the paradigm from African Indigenous Religion into Christianity such that one wonders about the real identity of Christianity in Africa. As Oguejiofor (2001) notes, while the Gods of African religion were said to be in retreat in 1977, today forty years after, a careful interpreter will notice that while the artifacts of the gods have largely been wiped out, the creedal structure that underline their relevance has been very largely left intact and has in more recent years been strengthened by a type of Christianity that has now gained overwhelming support in Africa. The major effect of the return of the Gods in the form of transposition of categories from African Indigenous Religion to Christianity is that these categories while remaining African Indigenous Religion paradigms have been clothed with the garments of Christianity. The negative influence of this is evident in the practice of Christianity in Africa today. From the foregoing, it can be seen that the return of the Gods is the basis for the revival of African traditional religion. The objective of this study is to examine the return of the Gods as the basis for African traditional religious renaissance. The method employed for this study is the historical method. The discussion was done under the following subheadings, the meaning of renaissance, the return of the Gods and African traditional religious renaissance.

>%#*S++*#Q%&

Etymologically, the word renaissance comes from an old French word “renaistre” which means to be born again. It also has a Latin origin “renascere” which means to be born. It means a revival of or a renewed interest in something probably the bringing again into activity and prominence of a culture and learning that has been in abeyance. According to Linda (1974), it is a term that historians use in describing a special period in Europe that falls roughly between the fourteenth and sixteenth centuries and right after the middle ages. In the view of Okumu (2002), the renaissance was a period of great developments of a new style of art and architecture that represented a new birth or renewal of nations and their people. Every secluded corner or recess of society was revolutionized. Whatever was old or archaic was renovated and revised. Everything was renascent, springing up anew or being reborn. It is in this light that the return of the Gods is connected with the resurgence, regeneration, restoration, renewal or rebirth of the African continent in such a way as to engender the revival of African religion and culture. However, Africans believe they are entering a new era that is being referred to as the African renaissance. This era has the potential of impacting on the value system of all Africans who are searching for their lost cultural heritage. The search for a lost cultural heritage may be reflected in Christian churches and schools that emulate western based curricula and western forms of expression for instance, language, music, administration, forms of praise and worship etc. Africa is a continent of interrelationships in which all aspects of life are interrelated. Therefore, African traditional renaissance cannot be understood through a fragmentation of its various social components such as religion, culture, economy, identity, education and so on. To separate education from culture, economy, identity and religion is to do injustice to the continent and its people. It is known that African people are very religious, so it follows that religion is an integral part of life in Africa. Therefore, the gods must return to take their place in various communities for the revival or restoration of African religion. The Africa traditional renaissance vision is an all-embracing concept that draws its inspiration from the rich and diverse history and culture of Africa. It acknowledges Africa as the cradle of humanity whilst providing the frame work for modern Africa to reemerge as a significant partner in the new world order.

DU%&>%\$/ ,#&''\$U%&="R+

The return of the Gods invariably marks a return to African traditional religion which is the focus of African traditional religious renaissance. According to Adunchezor (2015), every community is founded upon some sense of mystery that surrounds its existence. The citizens are subjected to their mysterious beings for either fortunes or misfortunes. But they often desire the fortunes over misfortunes. Therefore, the mysterious things are related with and placated through acts of worship, obedience and sacrifices.

There are laws guiding the citizens against provocation of these transcendental beings. The information and related education for the sake of formidable awareness is often sustained in the myths and historic places or things. Hence, experiences and stories are concretized in tangible objects. Thus, the Romans had gods of the Sun, Moon and rocks. The Jews experienced the God that revealed the God self to them on the mountains and significant places of encounters with the Divine. The Tainos, Pueblos and most Native American communities have similar relationships with their native cultural environments. It is a very common experience for most African societies. Adunchezor(2015) further adds that among the Igbo people, there are as numerous places as there are numbers of human communities and societies in the world. Things around the environment constitute the substratum for the articulation and vesting of the spiritual to concretize the faith. Among the Igbo people, he continues, things like *omu* (palm frond), *oji* (kolanut), *nzu* (earth chalk) and others embody spiritual connotations that are linked with deities and ancestral spirits beyond mere social lives. Artifacts like *ogene* (metal gong), *igba* (wooden drum with animal skin), *ekwe* (wooden gong), *oja* (flute) and others are all elements and artifacts for divine worship; carved objects are symbols of deities. It looks like humans create gods of their own kind, in their own places, with their own things. However, huge things remain unknown. Nature is still inexhaustible. Fear of the unknown did not resolve itself. A great sense of mystery abounds. Humans still search for Ultimate Being. The sense of the Almighty God who is the God of gods creeps in, the lesser gods are configured to be agents of the Supreme God. So, humans settle with fear, loyalty and worship through the more proximate gods to placate the anger and reinforce the good relationship with the Almighty. As Mbiti (1970) puts it, whatever science may do to prove the existence or non-existence of the spirits, one thing is undeniable namely, that for African peoples, the spirits are reality which must be reckoned with, whether it is a clear, blurred or confused reality. This approach to life enables many Africans to deal with the many fears and insecurities inherent in their daily existence. According to Banda(2010), African traditional religion, Islam and Christianity proclaim that the Supreme Being influences events on earth, providing rain and good harvests, determining the lives of human beings, for example by giving them success in certain endeavours etc. The Supreme Being can be petitioned and placated especially by making use of intermediaries. So, he can and does play a definitive role in their daily lives. Indeed, when misfortune befalls Africans, they may more often than not ascribe this to the fact that the Supreme Being had been ignored or mistreated in their daily lives. Leaving God and religion out of the equation in Africa, therefore is far more unacceptable than consciously making the Supreme Being and the associated spirit world part of the whole equation. Orji and Ogbonnaya (2016) observe that in spite of the purported acceptable and overthrow of the host religion, Igbo traditional religion persists as a force of considerable consequences in contemporary society, even if it has undergone

a number of modifications. And nowhere is this truer than its continued transmuted practices. Having traced the major lines of continuity of certain core traditional Igbo (African) religious beliefs, practices, values and attitudes such as the development of Ethiopianism, Godianism, Syncretism and Pentecostal remnants of the world, it can be affirmed that traditional religion has great prospects. The Nanka conflict of 1993 announced with unmistakable clarity that the time of the absorption of foreign invasion was over. The time for counter attack has begun. What this means is that Christianity should not hoist the victory banner. African traditional religion is still alive and well. African culture and traditional religion have not surrendered and would not surrender to a foreign rival without a fight. Mitchel, an American sociologist who conducted an in depth research on traditional religions of Africa prior to contact with Islam or the West, wrote to say that since it is fashionable in many parts of Africa today to publicly count oneself as a Muslim or Christian, there are doubtless many more millions of Africans who are in reality far more involved in the primal religion than in their professed Muslim or Christian faith. Thus, the primal religions are still very much alive at least for the present. This is a pointer to the overt but apparently covert existence of syncretism among African peoples with a weightier tilt and slant towards African Indigenous Religions. The persistence of this belief is quite considerable even among the educated. Some seek the assistance of sacred specialists (medicine men) in times of crisis such as during promotion, in search of a partner etc. Africans are seriously attached to their religion and even in the next century will find it extremely difficult to sever relationship with it in almost every circumstance. According to Nnamani (2006), by far the most important area we see this continuity of traditional religion is found in African independent churches and Pentecostalism. This can be demonstrated in a few ways. Common to Pentecostalism is the attempt to offer people a personal encounter with God through the power of the spirit, healing from sicknesses and deliverance from evil in all its manifestations, spiritual, social and structural. Obviously, he further states that the belief system of the Pentecostals resonates what is obtainable in African worldview about the pervasive power of the spirit and belief that religion should address the here and now problems taking care of the daily needs and providing healings from sicknesses and protection against the evil spirits. Oguejiofor (2001) and Mbefo (1996) also lent their voices to say, usually, the votaries come for one difficulty or the other and stay on as long as they retain the hope of getting what is being sought for. When this hope fails, there is a movement to another minister or deity who is acclaimed to be endowed with more powers or gifts. The abandonment of one miracle centre for another is the same tendency in the traditional African which makes him ready to jettison, expel or neglect an inefficient deity. It is therefore not surprising to find large crowds attend Shiloh and the Holy Ghost Congress of Bishop David Oyedepo and Pastor Enoch Adeboye respectively. In traditional religions, revelations from the

gods, ancestors and spirits were a day to day experience. Taking into consideration the will of the spirit world, Obi(2006) notes that the gods, the voice of the gods and the ancestors made explicit through oracular divination were a standard way of life. In Pentecostalism, emphasis on the spirit prophecy, vision, revelation, faith, healing, hearing the voice of God and search for power is paramount. It is these factors that are rooted in African traditional religion that account for the huge success of Pentecostalism and even the orthodox churches that initially criticized the practice are adopting the same today. The supreme place of religion in traditional Africa has been noted. The fact has led to the persistence of the traditional religion structured around belief in God, the divinities, ancestors, spirits and the practice of magic and medicine. In this traditional worldview, the spirit world, the invisible is believed to control all facets of the visible life and has the final say. The divinities can intervene in human affairs and reward or punish bad and good deeds. The ancestors the guardians of public morality can also punish or reward behaviour. The goal of the African is to live a good life and at death be joined to the ancestors after receiving proper burial. Its worldview is “this-worldly”. This explains why traditionalists initially rejected the Christian message because the missionaries told them that at death, they would not join their ancestors. This worldly worldview which is anthropocentric persists among the Pentecostals particularly with the prosperity gospel of me I no go suffer(I will not suffer mentalities). Mbefo(1996) notes that in the rural areas of *Abakaliki, Afikpo, Awka, Oji, Udi* and *Ogbaru* districts, Igbo traditional religious beliefs and practices still thrive, notwithstanding the presence of Christianity in the area. In many places, the gods and deities are still acknowledged in the respective localities with their shrines and cults and symbols kept by the traditional priests and custodians. A good example is the Agulu incident. Some years ago, The Sunday Times of April 1986 carried as headline news the caption “Give us back our God”. Agulu people of Aniocha LGA who are Nanka's neighbor had a god called Haba whose wooden image had been carted away to the National Museum at Onikan, Lagos and is on display as an element of antiquity. The god has been appearing to Agulu people complaining of his confinement and as a consequence, he has been causing spiritual problems disturbing the Agulu people. Agulu people are educated men and women who today can boast of erstwhile Governor Peter Obi of Anambra State and Late Professor Dora Akunyili and they have written to the Director of National Museum to return their estranged god with immediate effect.

Today, people still sue or summon their disputing opponents to *Haba Shrine* to settle conflicts, land cases, business deals and theft just as they use *Okija Shrine* and elsewhere such as *Ayelala* in Edo and the South West. Recently, in a related incident, Vanguard (November 28, 2013) reported a case of the reappearance of a mysterious stream with healing powers in Nachi community of Udi LGA, Enugu state, almost 42years after it surfaced and

disappeared in the same place. According to an octogenarian and community leader in Nachi, Mr. Festus Udeh, the stream surfaces and disappears every 20 to 30 years. It forbids evil things. He said that every evil doer that goes to the stream might run into serious problems. This attracted a lot of pilgrims among traditionalists and Christians alike. The annual liturgical calendar continues to be strictly lived out from cycle to cycle with a good number that had joined Christianity participating in certain instances like Ifejioku festival and Ilo-muo, for example, the Catholic Archbishop of Owerri Archdiocese hosts the annual Ifejioku lectures by seasoned lecturers, an acculturated version of the earlier tradition. In Aguluezechukwu, Aguata LGA of Anambra state, masquerades still show up at traditional festivals of OnwaNkwo and Isigwu in October and November respectively. Elsewhere, divination, oracular consultation, charms and other protective ritual performances associated with the major events of life are practiced to maintain the harmony believed to exist between the world of men and the spirit world. Other forms of continuity of Igbo traditional religion is the syncretistic religious phenomenon known as Godianism of Chief K O K Onyioha comparable to Oba of Benin's Aruosa cult or Orunmilaism in Yorubaland an attempt to blend both traditional materials and some Christian liturgical practices. Furthermore, the worldview of most Igbo professing Christians remains that which is inherited from the traditional religion. To this, Ejizu (1985) adds that certain traditional beliefs such as reincarnation, ogbanje, sorcery and the dynamic negative activities of the spirit and cosmic forces still persist in the minds of many professing Christians today. These show up in moments of life crises of Christians who waste no time in seeking traditional assistance to solve such problems. Diviners and protective charm makers still number among their clients a good percentage of Igbo baptized Christians including politicians and pastors. Mbiti (cited by Thomas, 2015) argued that African independent churches address Africans' need to maintain ties with their tradition whereas Christianity allows them to enter the realm of modernity. The Africans' move to establish independent churches attests to the desire to maintain a relationship with the tradition of their ancestors. Within some independent African churches, traditional practices such as polygamy and female circumcision are maintained. Independent churches are reflective of the identity struggle that has plagued Africa since Alexander the Great invaded the continent in 332 BCE. From that time, Africans have accepted a perspective of life that conflicts with their perception of reality. They remain torn between two dimensions and are forced to exist in both worlds. Within the independent churches, they exist within this bifurcated sphere where they feed the Gods of Christianity with one hand and serve the ancestors with the other. Politicians who go to church also consult traditional priests to ask for their blessings and protection and to acquire spiritual powers with which to prosecute elections. Even the Christians in the villages combine their Christian faith with traditional practice. For instance, they believe that no matter how strong one's Christian faith may be, one must

perform certain customary and traditional rites for the dead during or after burial in order to appease or pacify the spirit of the dead. This cannot be guaranteed by Christianity. A certain Christian was asked to perform the traditional rite of “*igbuewu*” for the dead father, he said, his Christian faith could not allow him to kill a goat as required by tradition for his dead father but he was advised to ignore his Christian faith and do it so as to avert any future calamity that may occur as result of this omission. On the other hand, pastors, evangelists and reverends have had to consult and still consult traditional priests (medicine men) in order to acquire more spiritual powers to enable them manipulate and influence decisions in the church. In all this, they perform certain rituals including human sacrifice. Another good example according to Adunchezor (2015) is the Imo-Awka deity. The Awka people no longer consider someone who kills the sacred monkey(*enwe-Imoka*) through the perspective of social injustice for destroying the security reserve for which the Awka people immortalized the animal whose signal characters contributed to their survival in the ancient period. Rather, the society has transitioned to the Awka people believing that the person sinned against *Imoka* itself and would expect the *Imoka* to afflict evils on the culprit. However, the *Imoka* could only afflict the person(s) not because the person sinned against the security of the people who believe that *Imoka* protects them. Hence, the law that forbids the killing of the sacred monkeys is now associated with the gods of the land. The fear of *Imoka* deity now fortifies the law that forbids the killing of the sacred monkeys, whereas the Awka people had stopped the killing and eating of the monkeys many eras before the amalgamation that resulted in bringing the *Imoka* deity from previous abode in Ifite-Awka to the present location then (thick forested area) at Amachalla-Awka. Hence, the laws protect the gods while the latter strengthens the force of the laws.

? ' ,SQ*#D, *RSSH''#*.k>%.SYS'' / +k>%#*S++*#Q%

From the beginning of western dominance, there were some Africans who rejected the alien cultural forms forced upon them by the Arabs and Europeans. For example, Parrinder (cited by Thomas, 2015) notes that certain West African societies rejected Christianity. Those cultural groups that rejected Christianity and Islam have been referred to by some practitioners of traditional African cultural forms as the faithful remnants that kept the African gods alive. The African remnants scattered throughout the diaspora and survived numerous attacks from those who promote violence, which is a concomitant of white power. African culture has survived despite the forces it battles on a daily basis. These forces aim to drive black culture and the people who honour their heritage out of existence. The African remnant that survived modernity struggled to keep alive the knowledge passed down to them. Proponents of African culture struggle against those

who insist that all people must serve the god of western imperialism. For Thomas (2015), the re-Africanization of the black mind began to gather momentum in the mid-twentieth century after African nations were emancipated from European tyranny. The new sense of freedom created mass movements by Africans in the continent and throughout the New World. In Africa, the return to African cultural forms was called "Utamaduni." In the United States, it was known as the Black Power Movement. Later, a more conscious and refined movement called Afrocentricity emerged. The revival was strengthened by the realization that there really was nothing to be ashamed of in the African culture and heritage; contrary to the European attitude that most of what was in the African culture was bestial in nature. On the other hand, Bulklawood (cited by Ugwu, 1986) in a research work carried out among the Asaba people of Delta State came up with the view that "Asaba (African) people bow down to idols of blood and stone" (p.48). but Ugwu (2008) objects to that by pointing out that African people do not bow down to stones, wood, blood or other objects of worship, rather, it was the spirit conceived to be incorporeal and invisible behind these objects that were the target of the worshippers. He further maintained that this phenomenon is common to most world religions. For instance, no one addresses a Christian or a Judaist in those derogatory languages even when the crucifix, rosary and other images abound in their religion. Westermann (1937) points out more clearly the wrong impressions among the European scholars about African traditional religion when he said that "The African god is *deus incertus*" and *deus remotus*" and that there is always an atmosphere of indefiniteness about him" (p.15). The African god is not an absentee landlord. He is a God of justice and is not far from Africans because he answers whenever he is called upon to dispense justice. Basden (1966) adds that The downright truth is that the Europeans find it difficult to fathom the native mind. They are generally ignorant of the essential spiritual element which will equip them to unravel the intricacies of the native mind and their ancient law and custom. (p.5). In Africa, traditional religion is bound with culture. This means that in traditional Africa, cultural life is intricately bound with their religion. For one to interpret one's cultural life, one's religion must be properly addressed. So, the missionaries handed on the baton of hatred for African traditional society, religion and culture to African Christians. And as it stands now, African Christians hate any association with African traditional religious culture because they sincerely believe it to be satanic. Ekwunife (2012) further maintains that the Christians and Muslims deny the votaries of African traditional religion the status "Supreme God". These so called world religions apportion to African traditionalism gods and at best call their system polytheistic while claiming monotheism as a fitting term for their system. However, African traditional

religious renaissance must be suited in the cultural component which challenges the right of the Europeans to impose their cultural and spiritual values on African communities. This cultural project according to Uhuru (2014) could be traced back to 15th century when Europe sought to make Christianity a universal religion in order to contain Islam, African religion and Asian belief systems. The rebellion of the African masses both in the continent and in the Diaspora against enslavement and against European colonialism were in fact the reflection of the struggle for an African recovery and regeneration. This is why throughout this period attempts were made by African intellectuals to assert African identity and achievements. These were part of the process of the struggle for African renaissance. In this struggle, Othman (2014) notes that cognizance must be taken of the visionary efforts of pan-African advocates of the 20th century like Kwame Nkrumah, Leopold Sedar Senghor, Marcus Garvey, Malcolm X, Martin Luther King among others who offered Africans the right to self-determination. These pan-Africanists in their quest to emancipate the continent from oppression, mobilized Africans from the Diaspora and within the continent into pressure groups and with steadfastness, they slowly but steadily liberated Africans from the many injustices they were subjected to by the imperialists. African states gradually gained their independence and an Organization of African Unity now African Union was formed as a recognized global outfit defending the interest of the continent and her people. The struggle according to Uhuru (2014) took a global approach with the aim of rehabilitating the image of the black man wherever he is as an expression of black personality. Thus, the essence of the call for African Renaissance is a call for a continued African resistance to western domination and exploitation of Africans, the process of Africa restating her original message and her own way that was at the same time global.

However, the concept of African renaissance as conceived by Thabo Mbeki in Nabudere (2001), the former President of South Africa, who in a seminar speech titled "I am an African" on the occasion of the adoption of the new South African constitution in May, 1996 expounded the quest for African traditional religious rebirth and identity. This is a right step in the right direction especially at this period when the African appears to have lost his identity and personality. The African has put on the garb of modernism and western civilization to the detriment of his much cherished African values. As Mavimbela (1998) observes, there is reason to believe that part of the explanation for the Asian resilience is the fact that Asian cultures were able to limit the extent of western culture on their social life. For instance, their written languages and their written traditions provided a more solid base for cultural resistance. They maintained written religious cultures with verifiable histories in Hinduism, Islam and so on. Cabral(1973) calls it a "*returntothesource*" which for him meant the critical appropriation of the vigour, vitality and the ebullience of African existence by the assimilated

African elites who had been alienated from their source by Portuguese culture and history. It is this memory which was reawakened and reignited by the anti-colonial struggle. In this regard, the major concern of the early pan-Africanists according to Davidson(1994) was to claim for the blacks of Africa as well as of the Americas the same real equality of human values with other people which were precisely what the black culture of enslavement and imperialism had denied all black peoples. Kebede (cited by Anyadike, 2016) sums up Mbiti's position on this matter thus, the traditional cannot be simply pushed away; to think so is an illusion which only succeeds in turning the traditional into a subconscious force, all the more resentful because it is ignored. The best approach is to try to satisfy it by means of modern expressions. This harmonization of the traditional with the modern is called "*creativesynthesis*" which counters the rise of a bastard culture, the main impediment to Africa's advances. To some, according to Etuk(2002), the terms "cultural re-birth", "cultural revival" etc. have tended to connote and conjure a deep desire to rediscover and return to the ways of life of Nigerians of various ethnic origins, for the sake of being authentic Nigerians. He recalled that about twenty years ago, it was the philosophy which fired a great deal of nationalism in emergent nations of Africa. This was notably the case in the African nation of Zaire now Democratic Republic of Congo where the strongman used authenticity as an excuse for a spate of persecutions on the Christian church, including compelling of Christians by the nationality law to abandon their Christian names in favour of authentically Congolese names. President Mobutu SeseSeko was quoted as saying; none of my ancestors had these sonorous first names. I admire those who love and fear God, not the God of Westerners but the Supreme Being revealed to us through our traditions. Thereafter, church newspapers were banned, all confessional organizations were banned, the Cardinal of the Catholic Church was exiled. The President himself dropped his Christian name "Joseph" and took on "SeseSeko" because his ancestors did not have the sonorous first names. However, it is interesting to note that Christianity has borrowed the lively method of Igbo worship such as singing, dancing, drumming and spontaneity. In a bid to revive the traditional justice system, people still consult various deities in their respective communities in Igbo land for unraveling of mysteries and settlement of cases ranging from fraud, land snatching, theft, adultery, murder and other criminal incidents. They also seek protection, provision and blessing from such deities. Also, most communities in Igbo land, have days called "Cultural Day" earmarked for the celebration of the culture and tradition of their respective communities. On such occasions, traditional dances, songs, masquerade display and lectures to remind the people of their history and origin as well as their identity are observed. From time to time, conferences and seminars are held to educate, acquaint or remind the people of their history, culture and tradition e.g. Ahajioku Lecture which is held every year to commemorate the New Yam Festival. Most individuals in Igbo land now drop foreign names attached to their names in their bid to reclaim their identity and return to Igbo culture. To sustain the quest for the renaissance of Igbo customs and tradition, the culture and tradition of the Igbo people are now packaged in movies popularly known as Nollywood for other people to watch and appreciate. According to Obiefuna and Aniago(2010), movies breakdown

cultural boundaries across the world. African films which most times reflect Igbo (African) world views, images, ideas, values and styles are watched today by people of other countries and in one way or the other, they impact on their psyche. In an article published in the Christian Century, Mbiti (1980) noted that the God described in the Bible is none other than the God who is already known in the framework of traditional African religiosity. The missionaries who introduced the gospel to Africa in the past 200 years did not bring God to African continent. Instead, God brought them. They proclaimed the name of Jesus Christ. But they used names of the God who was already known to African people such as *Mungu, Mulungu, Chukwu, Olodumare, Ngai, Asis, Unkulunkulu, Katonda, Jok, Modimo* etc. These were not empty names. They were names of one and the same God, the Creator of the world, and the father of our lord Jesus Christ.

>%Q" 0 0#R*\$S"#

For the renaissance of African traditional religion to take place and for Africa to return to her glorious past, the following suggestions have been made Just like the Christians, Jews and Muslims who have churches, synagogues and mosques respectively for the worship of God, Africans should build shrines and temples for god in their respective communities for the worship of the Supreme Being. For a complete revival of African traditional religion, we must remove bad practices, write the sacred lore, write the prayers legends etc., mark and recognize the sacred sites and days. The priests and custodians of African religion should embark on evangelism so as to disabuse the minds of Africans about the satanic impression ascribed to their religion by the colonialists. Africans should also equip traditional religious officials with formal education in the same way the foreign religions do their own adherents to enable them carry on with the revival of traditional religion.

! "#Q./+S"#

The patronage of pastors, evangelists and the elites to traditional priests and medicine men is a clear evidence that the gods have returned and it is only a matter of time before they take their respective places in various African communities. The various festivals and traditional religious ceremonies such New Yam Festival, Ofoala Festival, Cultural Day celebrations etc. also lend credence to the assertion that African religion is being revived.

>% '%, % #Q%+

Adunchezor, C. C. (2015). *Culture and components: Definitions and Meanings*. Glassboro-New Jersey: Goldline& Jacobs.

Aniago, P. O & Obiefuna, B. A.C.(2010). *The sense and nonsense of Globalization vis-à-vis Igbo indigenous religion*, In A.B.C Chiegboka, T. C.Utoh-Ezeajuh& G. I Udechukwu(eds.), *The Humanities and Globalization in the Third Millenium*, pp 336-345. Nimo: Rex Charles & Patricks.

Anyadike, C. (2016). Mbiti and Achebe on the forward movement through the past, In *the Journal of Traditions and Beliefs*: vol.2, article 8.

Asiegbu, M. F.(2010). *African renaissance, globalization and philosophy*, In A.B.C Chiegboka, T.C Utoh-Ezeajuh and G.I Udechukwu(eds.), *The*

Humanities and Globalization in the Third Millennium, pp 77-91. Nimo: Rex Charles & Patricks.

Banda, Z. (2010). *African renaissance and missiology: A perspective from mission praxis*. Unpublished D Th Thesis. Unisa.

Basden, G. (1966). *Among the Igbo of Niger*. London: Frank Cass.

Cabral, A. (1973). *Return to the source: Selected speeches*. New York: Monthly Review Press.

Davidson, B. (1994). *The search for Africa: A history in the making*. London: James

Currey, Ekwunife, A. (2010). *Naming the ultimate in African traditional religion: A historical perspective*; in God, Bible and African Traditional Religion: Acts of SIST International Missiological Symposium, 17-20 March, 2009, Bede Ukwuije (ed.). Enugu: Snaap.

Ekwunife, A. (2012). *Naming the ultimate in African traditional religion: A historical perspective*, In E. O Ezenweke & I. A Kanu (eds.). *Issues in African traditional Religion and Philosophy*, pp 1-39. Jos: Augustinian Publications.

Ejizu, C. (1985). *Continuity and discontinuity in Igbo traditional religion*. *The Gods in Retreat: Continuity and change in African Religion*, E.I Metuh (ed.), pp 133-156. Enugu: Fourth Dimension.

Etuk, U. (2002). *Religion and cultural identity*. Ibadan: Hope Publications.

Linda, R. D. (1974). *Renaissance*, In the New International Dictionary of the Christian Church, J. D. Douglas (ed.). Grand Rapids: Zondervan Corporation.

Mavimbela, V. (1998). *The African renaissance: A workable dream*, In G. Pere; A. Nieuwkerk; K. Lambrechts (eds.), *South Africa and Africa: Reflections on the African Renaissance*, Foundation for Global Dialogue. FGD Occasional Paper No. 17.

Mbefo, L.N. (1996). *Christian theology and African heritage*. Onitsha: Spiritan Publication. Mbiti, J. S. (August 27-September 3, 1980). *The encounter of Christian faith and African religion*. Switzerland: The Christian Century Foundation, pp 817-820.

- Mbiti, J.S.(1970). African religions and philosophy. New York: Doubleday.Mitchel,
R.C.(1977).African primal religions. Niles: Argus
Communications.
- Nabudere, D.W.(2001).The African renaissance in the age of globalization, In African
Journal of political Science, vol.6 No.2, pp 11-27.
- Nnamani, A. G.(2006). The ambivalent impact of Pentecostalism in enculturation. The
New Religious Movements: Pentecostalism in perspective, A. Nnamani(ed.),
pp 235-251. Benin City: Ava Publishers.
- Obi, C.A.(2006).The holy spirit and Pentecostalism: Lesson from Early Church, The
New Religious Movements:Pentecostalism in perspective, A.
Nnamani(ed.),pp 119-137. Benin City: Ava Publishers.
- Obinna, A.(2010).Chi and Christ in Igbo salvation experience: An explication in God,
Bible and African Traditional Religion: acts of SIST International
Missiological Symposium, 17-20 March, 2009. Bede Ukwuije(ed.). Enugu:
Snaap.
- Okumu,W.A.J.(2002).The African renaissance: History, Significance and Strategy.
Asmara: Africa World Press.
- Oguejiofor,J. O. (2001). Miracle Christianity.The Nigerian Journal of
Theology.Vol.15,pp 38-54.
- Orji, C. &Ogbonnaya, J.(eds.).(2016).Christianity and culture collision particularities
and trends from a Global South. Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars.Othman, R.
(May 23, 2014). Gambia: African culture-Prospects and Challenges in the
21st Century.The Daily Observer.
- Thomas, E. D. (2015). African traditional religion in the modern world. North Carolina:
McFarland & Company Inc.
- Ugwu, C. O. T. (1986). The future of African traditional religion in Obollo-Eke in Isiuzo
L G A. Unpublished B.A Thesis.Dept. of Religion.
- Ugwu, C. O. T. (2008). The eclipse of identity: Religion on the lens of camera, In M.
Dukor (ed.), Globalization and African Identity: An Interdisciplinary
International Journal of Concerned Philosophers. Vol.5, pp 62-73.
- Uhuru, S. A. (May 23, 2014). The African renaissance and reclaiming the 21st Century.
Africa Thisday.
- Westermann, D. (1937).Africa and Christianity. London: Oxford University.